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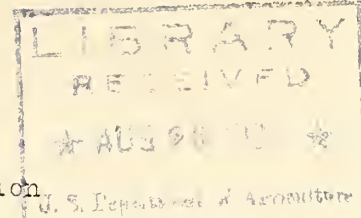
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EGGS

by

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The U. S. Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, grades eggs and issues "Grading Certificates" which show the grade of condition to either shippers or receivers in the trade. This grading service is available to distributors of quality eggs and some few avail themselves of the service. Those dealers are permitted to place on the cartons of graded eggs a "Certificate of quality," which states the date the eggs were graded, together with their quality. In addition, there appears the name of the firm and the size of eggs, whether large or medium. Three grades of eggs are recognized as suitable for table use. The first, or highest, is the U.S. Special. The second is the U.S. Extra, and third, the U. S. Standard. The fourth grade is called the U.S. Trade and embraces such eggs as are suitable for use in cooking and baking. They go chiefly to the bakery trade.

Three sizes of eggs are recognized in each grade. The first is "large" eggs, or those which average 24 ounces per dozen. The second is the "medium" grade, sometimes called Pullets, averaging 20 ounces per dozen. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics does not issue "Certificate of quality" on smaller eggs. The "Small" eggs, or "Pee Wees", average 16 ounces to the dozen and, as a rule, are not sold in cartons. They might rattle. In a pile they appear of larger size.

Certain states have special legislation governing the terms applied to eggs which are at what variance with the recognized U. S. grades. For example, in California the term "Fresh Eggs", or its equivalent, when appearing on labels, means a product comparable with the U.S. Special grade. If labeled "Eggs" unqualified, Farm Eggs, Ranch Eggs, or under a manufacturer's brand, the eggs need be of only a U. S. Extra grade. Some storage eggs meet this grade requirement. You will seldom find on the market in California any eggs labeled U.S. Standard, or third quality, of the so-called table grades. These are what you get in unlabeled packages of eggs, or under certain brands which do not indicate quality. They are cheap in price, as well as quality.

Remember, now, for an egg to meet the "U.S. Special" grade, the shell must be clean and sound. The yolk is dimly visible when held to the light. The white is firm and clear; the germ is not visible, and the air space at end of egg does not exceed one-eighth of an inch in depth, and is regular. The requirements for the "U.S. Extra" grade are essentially the same, except that a quarter-inch space is allowable. Into this class, you will note, will fall some storage eggs. In the "U.S. Standard" grade the air-cell space permitted is three-eighths of an inch and, in addition, the white need be only reasonably firm and the germ may be slightly visible when the egg is held before the candle.

My friends, you will occasionally find the word "Certified" on cartons of eggs but that does not mean that those eggs are certified by the Government. Eggs which have been graded by representatives of the U.S.

Department of Agriculture will have a sticker label, applied on the carton, which is designated as a "Certificate of Quality", issued by authority of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Certain distributing firms avail themselves of this grading service. If, when buying eggs, you desire to be absolutely certain as to grade or standard, insist upon getting those eggs which bear an official "Certificate of Quality". Your retail grocer can get them; if you insist upon that kind.

I wonder if you always get a bargain when you buy cheap eggs. Did you notice those weights I gave you for the large, the medium and small? They were 24, 20 and 16 ounces per dozen. When you buy a large egg you actually receive 16-2/3% more weight than when you buy the medium, or Pullet, grade; likewise 33-1/3% more weight than when you buy a "small" or "Pee Wee".

My friends, many of your storage eggs today do not deteriorate as they did in former years. They are oil-processed eggs. The process consists either of immersing the eggs in oil for a short period or spraying them with mineral oil. Either treatment closes the pores in the shell of the egg and prevents evaporation, also consequent deterioration. Those firms employing this process generally label the case and carton in a manner indicating the eggs to have been shell treated. That the eggs have been treated is not readily apparent to you, because it is possible by sand blasting or dusting the shells to remove the film of oil, and it is only in a chemical laboratory that the treatment can be proven. Of course, there are certain dealers that are not above selling you such eggs as "fresh" eggs.

You may encounter the word "Sterilized" on cartons. If so, kindly note that it merely indicates that the eggs have been oil treated and constitutes a mis-nomer, for oil treatment of eggs is in no sense a process of sterilization.

F. H. McCampbell, Associate Market Specialist of the U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, at San Francisco, informs me there is a growing tendency in the egg trade to get away from the term "Storage" in the merchandising of eggs. More eggs are now being sold upon a quality basis. The fact that an egg has been placed in cold storage is not indicative of a low-quality egg. Stored eggs are seldom, if ever, carried over from season to season. In the west it is estimated that about 75% to 80% of eggs intended for long storage are first oil treated. After 6 to 7 months these eggs will generally grade in the "U. S. Extra" class.